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# Herald Union



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Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

March 15, 2005

## News flash

### Set clocks ahead

Don't forget to "spring forward" March 27 from 1 a.m. to 2 a.m. when Daylight Saving Time takes effect in Europe. When calculating the time difference between the United States and Europe keep in mind that Daylight Saving Time doesn't change in the United States until April 3.

### NSPS review

March 16 is the last day to review the proposed regulations for the new National Security Personnel System. The Department of Defense and Office of Personnel Management issued the proposed regulations and published them in the Federal Register on Feb. 14 with a 30-day public comment period. The regulations offer new rules and processes for pay and classification, performance management, hiring, reduction in force, disciplinary matters and appeal procedures, and labor-management relations. To view and comment on the proposed regulations or to review background information visit [www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps).

### Free subscriptions

A sporting magazine and non-profit sports organization have teamed up to thank military men and women by offering a free, one-year subscription to *The Sporting News Magazine*. *First Swing* and *The Sporting News* are funding subscriptions for 60 issues to the first 50,000 service members who register. Send your name and complete APO address to [firstswing36@hotmail.com](mailto:firstswing36@hotmail.com). If you are among the first 50,000 to respond, the magazine will begin arriving in six to eight weeks. There is no requirement to cancel the subscription at the end of the year; it will cancel automatically unless the individual decides to renew. Commanders may submit their units in place of individuals. For more information visit [www.sportingnews.com](http://www.sportingnews.com) or [www.firstswingcamps.com](http://www.firstswingcamps.com) online. (IMA-E Public Affairs)

## Army issues

### Delegates to take Army Family Action Plan concerns to European conference

The Installation Management Agency-Europe will host its annual European Army Family Action Plan Conference at Heidelberg's Patrick Henry Village Pavilion May 22-26.

Some 75 delegates from across IMA-E who have participated in the program at the local level will attend to discuss community issues that cannot be resolved at the individual installation or Area Support Group level.

"Each BSB and ASG conducts an annual AFAP conference where participants identify, develop and prioritize community concerns about well-being and quality of life," said Ricky Gibbons, IMA-E Army Community Service chief. "While about 90 percent of these items are specific to the community and can be addressed there, issues that cannot be resolved locally are forwarded by the ASG commander for inclusion in our Army in Europe AFAP Conference."

At the Army Europe level, the annual AFAP Conference is used to prioritize the ASG issues which are then briefed to the U.S. Army Europe and IMA-E leadership at the conference's conclusion. These issues are researched by the appropriate agencies and reviewed

at the AFAP Steering Committee Meeting, which meets twice a year.

The IMA-E regional director, USAREUR commander, deputy commander and command sergeant major decide if the issues can be resolved locally or must be forwarded to the Department of the Army for inclusion in their AFAP conference.

The DA AFAP Conference reviews and prioritizes issues needing DA, Department of Defense or congressional action. Also a general officer steering committee, chaired by the vice chief of staff of the Army, meets twice a year with voting members from each Army major command, principal Army staff offices and select Army secretariats. A general officer from the lead agency briefs each scheduled issue to give its status and receive guidance from the committee on future action.

"AFAP is open to active duty and reserve Soldiers, retirees, DA civilians and family members," Gibbons said. "It is one of the most effective means available for individuals at the grass roots level to affect positive change in their communities and the Army overall." (Courtesy of IMA-E Public Affairs)

**Sgt. Maj. of the Army Preston says**

## Thousands of Soldiers to change jobs in transformation



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston

**By Tech. Sgt. Jim Moser**  
Army News Service

More than 100,000 Soldiers will move from Cold War jobs to positions such as Military Police and civil affairs as part of Army transformation, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston said.

"We have a lot of troops in Cold War jobs," Preston said. "I call these high density, low demand fields. The Army is going to rebalance those people to high demand, low density fields like Military Police and civil affairs. Somewhere be-

tween 100,000 to 115,000 Soldiers will transform to new positions."

"Two things transformation gives our Soldiers and their families are predictability and stability," he said. "We have grown the Army by three brigades, and by 2006 this number will increase to 10. These new brigades and the ones already transformed in their respective divisions will have a three-year lifecycle. Troops in these brigades will remain together — train, deploy and redeploy as a team over a three-year period. So when a soldier goes

to one of these new brigades, he or she can plan on being with the unit for at least a three-year stay at a given location. When the three years are up, Soldiers can PCS to a new base or possibly remain where they are for another cycle."

It is not new news that the Army National Guard and Reserve are heavily engaged, Preston said, serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and other theaters around the world.

"In the past the Guard and Re-

**See Transformation on page 4**



Photo by Ulrike Raab

Hanau Middle School sixth-grader Deantra Rover (right) portrays Rosa Parks at the school's Black History Wax Museum.

## Students bring Black History Month to life

**By Karl Weisel**  
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

They say the best way to learn is by doing, and for Hanau Middle School students that translated into creating an interactive history lesson for Black History Month. Assuming the roles of notable Americans through history, the students shared their newfound knowledge with fellow middle-schoolers and Argonner Elementary School pupils in their Black History

Month Wax Museum Feb. 28.

"The Hanau Middle School sixth-graders put together the show. It was an idea I brought from my former school in Sembach," said Hanau Middle School Principal Georgia Williams-Fitzpatrick. "This gives the kids a chance to participate in the learning process, and all of the students a chance to learn about their cultural heritage."

"Kids listen to other kids,"

**See Black History Month on page 3**



## Did you know?

### Bush follows in long tradition of U.S. presidential visits to Germany

President George W. Bush's visit to Germany Feb. 24 followed a longstanding tradition that has brought every U.S. president to Germany over the half century of the republic's existence.

The Federal Republic of Germany was founded in May 1949 and was made up by the American, British and French post-World-War-II occupation sectors, whereas the Soviet occupation sector was turned into the communist German Democratic Republic a few months later. Consequentially, U.S. state visits in the following 40 years were paid only to Western Germany.

The first presidential visit was rendered by Dwight D. Eisenhower, World War II commander in chief and later military governor of the American sector, 10 years after the creation of the Western German republic. He was greeted in Bonn by 100,000 people and met there with his counterpart, Konrad Adenauer.

He was followed in 1963 by John F. Kennedy who was celebrated by a 1.3-million audience in Berlin like a pop star and said the famous words "Ich bin ein Berliner."

Lyndon B. Johnson came for Adenauer's funeral.

Richard M. Nixon was the first U.S. president to run into massive protests during an official visit in Germany because of the Vietnam War.

Gerald R. Ford and James E. Carter came to Germany in the 1970s, while Ronald W. Reagan dominated the '80s with three presidential visits where he called on then Soviet chief of state Mikhail Gorbachev, in a history-making speech, to tear down the Berlin Wall.

George H.W. Bush was one of the driving political forces in German reunification and visited Germany several months before the wall dividing Germany and Europe came down in 1989 and again shortly after Germany was reunited in 1990.

William J. Clinton tops the list with five presidential visits to Germany in the 1990s. According to surveys he was the most popular U.S. president in German public opinion after Kennedy.

President George W. Bush was the 10th U.S. president to visit Germany, a country that is 27 times smaller than the United States and yet a significant partner that the president called "the heart of Europe" during his visit.

U.S. Americans with German roots still make up the largest ethnic group in the United States with 57 million people claiming German ancestry in 1990, followed by Irish, British and African.

Germany ranks third behind China and Japan in the field of student exchange with the United States.

German companies provided 770,000 jobs in the United States in 2002, while U.S. companies provided 450,000 jobs in Germany.

The average income in the United States is \$36,500 compared to \$27,300 in Germany.

Cars remain Germany's biggest export item to the United States. (Compiled by Anemone Rueger from local German newspaper reports.)

## Writer inspired by visit

Commentary by LeAnne MacAllister  
222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

It doesn't happen every day.

For a brief moment members of the U.S. military and the 1st Armored Division family were invited to spend time with their president and commander in chief at Wiesbaden Army Airfield Feb. 23.

It was a unique opportunity for this Army spouse and Department of Defense civilian employee.

Not having come from a military background — I've been with my better-military-half for more than five years now — it still seems every day I learn something new about the culture that dictates our home and our decisions, be it through a military gathering or a chain of command concern.

Our world in Germany feels foreign in more ways than just the change of continents. I continue to struggle with the differences between what I call the real world and our real world, between my preconceived notions of marriage and the military's notions of family life.

As the president spoke I had the feeling he truly understands the struggle military families face daily. He seemed to get the fact that for military members and their families there are "never enough hours in a day" and that stress is a result of the complex decisions that come with the job. He continually acknowledged our vigilance and expressed his appreciation for our services.

Undoubtedly President Bush supports the military and wanted us to know the country is behind us. After all he gave his valuable time to accomplish this mission. He didn't have to stop in Wiesbaden between meetings with European leaders, and I appreciate that he chose to make the visit.

The experience of seeing President Bush in person created a second wind in me that couldn't have been achieved through staring at a television or reading a newspaper. I have doubts from time to time, but I believe that is common for members of the military family.

The president reminded us of the pride that comes with living the values of duty, honor and country every day. While I know America supports us, a bad day, week or lonely

month can push the good stuff to the back burner in minutes. It's easy to ignore a motivational commercial or a news brief, but hearing the president say he's proud of the 1st Armored Division directly to its Soldiers and families helps me see the bigger picture again. His words and actions renewed my faith and helped me remember who truly stands behind my family and my Soldier.

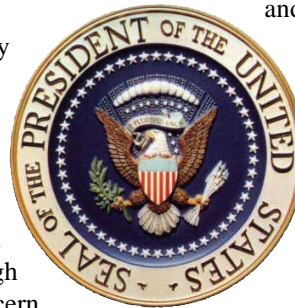
The setting of the president's speech in Wiesbaden only added to this sentiment. A fest tent with an American Idol finalist, a Texas band, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and first lady Laura Bush made it clear this was a day to honor Soldiers. The momentous event resounded with a spirit of unity much larger than any fest tent could hold.

I spent most of my time in that tent looking around at the Soldiers. I found myself experiencing much of the event through their reactions. A rush of humility swept over me. Coming from the private sector, I can tell you there is no parallel. A CEO may come to visit and you may hang on his every word, but he cannot order you into a war zone. And on the other side of that coin, a businessman will never know the joy of a hero's welcome for doing a job that asked him to put everything he loves on the line for the call of his country.

I found myself thinking about how proud I am to work for the U.S. government and how honored I am to serve the Soldiers of the Baumholder military community. From now on I will try to hold onto that thought whenever I get cut off in the parking lot or the phone rings at 2 a.m. with a problem.

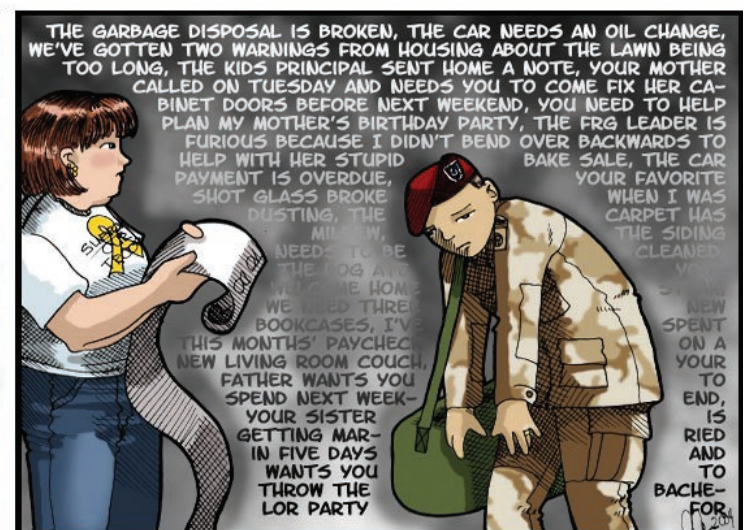
The president thanked us for doing what we do and making sacrifices we opt to make everyday. Sometimes we all forget this life was a choice, for better or worse, a choice that should constantly bring a feeling of pride to our hearts. It's easy to find aspects of military life that create a burden, but it's important to remember why we're here. And it's important to look around the room and realize what great people are at our sides.

I have always been proud of my heritage and proud to be an American. But being a part of the military community takes pride and respect to a whole new level. Thanks Mr. President — you made it clear to me.



## OPERATION ELUSIVE CONCEPT

WWW.ELUSIVE-CONCEPT.COM BY CHRIS ASHBY



## Herald Union

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# News and features

## News flash

### CID agents sought

The U.S. Army's Criminal Investigation Command seeks qualified applicants to become highly trained CID special agents. The CID investigates all felony crimes in which the Army has an interest, provides protective service operations and works closely with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to solve crimes and combat terrorism. Agents receive training at the U.S. Army Military Police School and advanced training in specialized investigative disciplines. Selected agents also receive advanced training at the FBI Academy, Canadian Police College and George Washington University where they can earn a master's degree in forensic science. To qualify an applicant must be a U.S. citizen, at least 21 years old, possess at least 60 semester hours of college credit and have a general technical score of at least 110. A minimum of six months police experience is preferred but not required. Visit [www.cid.army.mil](http://www.cid.army.mil) or contact your local CID office for details. (CID Public Affairs)

### AKO libraries online

Army Knowledge Online is partnering with Army libraries to provide a broad scope of Army information accessible 24 hours a day. The AKO site, which serves as the Army Libraries Community page, provides user authentication and access to authorized Army users. The Digital Army Library Service is the Army Library Program's homepage and its virtual library. Launched on AKO in May 2003 and accessible to 1.7 million users, this service shares expertise across the Army worldwide. It leverages the expertise of librarians in 29 global Department of Defense libraries. For more information visit the Army Libraries Community Page at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/login/welcome.html>, the Digital Army Library Service at [www.libraries.army.mil](http://www.libraries.army.mil), the Library Reference Center at [www.libraries.army.mil/refctr.htm](http://www.libraries.army.mil/refctr.htm) or the Military Education and Research Library Network at <http://merln.ndu.edu>. (ARNEWS)

### Job openings

Local military communities have a host of openings in their Child Development Centers and for Family Child Care providers. Obtain free training and advancement possibilities, college credit, work with children and get paid for it. Call your local Child and Youth Services office for more information.

Choctaw Management Services Enterprise seeks a Women, Infants and Child-Overseas administrative assistant. Position requires a high school diploma or equivalent with secretarial/business office experience or education; business training or associate's degree preferred; experience in health-related field desirable; must keyword 40-60 wpm; good communication and customer service skills. Job offers attractive salary and benefits package. Email your resume and cover letter to [kay.klumpyen@104asg.mwr.army.mil](mailto:kay.klumpyen@104asg.mwr.army.mil) or fax to civ (06181) 88-5312.



## Read Across America

Erina Francesconi, a Gen. H.H. Arnold High School junior, reads to Wiesbaden Middle School students as part of Read Across America activities March 2. Everyone from Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe deputy director Dr. Candace Ransing to Army and Air Force Exchange Service Europe commander Col. Shelley Richardson turned out in local schools to participate in the event aimed at encouraging young people to build a lifelong reading habit.

Photo by Pat Ridge

## Black History Month . . . . .

### Continued from page 1

she said, explaining that by having students portray various figures through history provided a more intimate learning experience. "It also helps the students improve their research skills."

Upon entry into the school auditorium where the museum was featured visitors were treated to a Powerpoint slide show featuring famous black Americans from A (poet, actor and civil rights activist Maya Angelou) to Z (Mathew Zimmerman - the first African American to graduate with a master of divinity degree from Duke University), a taped speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., displays featuring the names of African American Medal of Honor winners and a student rendition of James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson's "Lift Every Voice And Sing" - the Black National Anthem. Then visitors were invited to browse among the "wax figures," for a living history lesson as portrayed by the student actors.

"I selected Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," said Kevin LaFave, explaining that he was impressed by the civil rights leader's desire to ensure equal rights for all Americans. "I was able to hear his voice on tape."

Sixth-grader Dwayne Davis struck a pose as Muhammad Ali with his hands taped as if ready for a bout as he described his interest in the world champion boxer. "I was influenced by my dad. I learned about him by looking up things on the computer and checking out books from the library. I think he was a great man," Davis said, "and a very good fighter. He also stood up for his beliefs."

"I learned about Harriet Tubman when I was in the fourth-grade," said Jaclyn Tolen, portraying the courageous former slave who risked her life over and over again to help others find their way to freedom via the Underground Railroad. "I was impressed with how she freed slaves without getting caught. She kept going to the plantations to get to the slaves. That would have been very challenging."

Tolen said she read books on her own and got assistance from her teachers in researching Tubman. "I think you can learn a lot from it (the school's Black History Month Wax

Museum)," she said.

"Ray Charles was a role model - nothing could stop him," said sixth-grader Bryan Outar, as he played a few notes on an electric keyboard while wearing dark shades and talking to museum visitors. "You could pick any black person from history and I chose Ray Charles after seeing the movie. I was most impressed by the fact that he could still play the piano even though he was blind."

"We practiced the past month to get ready for this," said Hanau sixth-grade teacher Dr. Legena Roberts-Kpinkpin. "The students decided which black Americans they wanted to portray." Teachers worked up a list of prominent African Americans for those students who weren't sure about the person they wanted to depict, she added.

An important aspect of the museum is that not only do students observe Black History Month, but students of all ethnic backgrounds get a chance to celebrate the cultural heritage and contributions of all Americans to society, she said.

"They are doing a fantastic job," Roberts-Kpinkpin said. "Their hard work is definitely demonstrated this morning."

Roberts-Kpinkpin and her husband, Dr. Bonkai Kpinkpin who was born in Liberia, also prepared a special African meal featuring foods from Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Liberia

and Nigeria for the faculty earlier in the month.

"I got on the Internet and found out a lot of interesting things about her," said sixth-grader Deanta Rover, on her role as Rosa Parks at the wax museum. "Back then racism was going on and blacks had to sit in the back of the bus. She refused to give up her seat in the front. They threw her in jail, and that was a brave thing for her to do."

For sixth-grader Jerilyn Partin, portraying Maya Angelou was an honor. "I was impressed by all the stuff she did - actor, poet, civil rights activist," Partin said while she has only read "three or four of her poems," she was influenced by the fact that Angelou was chosen to read her poetry during President William Clinton's inauguration. "Out of all the people, they selected her."

"I took this project to get a little more involved myself in celebrating Black History Month," said Hanau Middle School teacher Stanley McCloud, praising the hard work of the students who put together the exhibition. "This is a way for students to play a part in black history."

As sixth-grader Sean Paul operated a laptop controlling the slide show of Black Americans from A to Z, he expressed what many felt about the experience. "A lot of research went into this - a lot of time. I just wish we could keep the museum open longer."



Photo by Ulrike Raab

Students listen as Ray Charles, alias Bryan Outar, describes his life at the wax museum.



## Military brings NATO allies together

By Anemone Rueger

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

The world keeps getting smaller.

That seems to be especially true for military members — whether one is in the German Navy or the U.S. Army.

A ceremony to recognize Bundeswehr (German military) force protection support brought two military men together whose paths nearly crossed a decade ago in Virginia. Col. Herman “Tracy” Williams III, 104th Area Support Group commander, and Master Chief Ferdinand Wieczorek, former commander of 5th Company, 1st Battalion, German Naval Infantry, realized they had a common bond during the Jan. 28 ceremony in Hanau.

“I was the executive officer at the Joint Training, Analysis and Simulation Center in Suffolk, Va., while he was in Norfolk, 25 minutes away,” said Williams. “We had the same headquarters, U.S. Atlantic Command, now known as U.S. Joint Forces Command, while he was in the Naval part of it.”

Wieczorek, a sailor in the German Navy since 1972 when he started as a radio man near Flensburg on the Baltic Sea, spent two years from August 1993 to September 1995 in NATO’s Personnel Exchange Program designed to further military cooperation between NATO members. His missions included a six-month tour on the USS Underwood in the Red Sea. “We served as kind of a border force and had to make sure Iraq didn’t get any weapons,” Wieczorek said. During his service on the vessel the crew boarded 668 ships for inspection.

“I remember the raising of the flag and the playing of the anthem on the ship at eight o’clock every morning,” Wieczorek said, “and I remember asking myself: Would you also be willing to die for this flag? I had to make a decision, and the decision I made proved to be right. I was always treated very nicely. People would say, hey, let the master chief do it, he

knows what he’s doing.”

“He’s served as a contingent of U.S. forces more so than many U.S. Americans,” said Williams. “He has spent so much time in the States he’s completely lost his [German] accent.”

Wieczorek said he owes his English language skills to the Royal Engineers, a sailing club of the Royal British Army in Kiel on the Northern German coast, a hold-over from British military presence after World War II. “I was regularly up there and built a long-standing friendship. When I graduated from school in 1969 I didn’t know any English. They didn’t teach it at that time. All the English I learned was from the Brits.”

His British accent also helped him tie a knot in the New World just before leaving to go back to Germany. After his assignment in the Red Sea Wieczorek was in charge of several housing units the Navy rented from the Army in Norfolk. “One female NCO who was working with me told her friend about ‘this cute British officer.’ She arranged for a blind date. Well, it turned out I was not British, but the date worked out.”

Wieczorek and Samantha Marie, who had worked for the Naval Dental Center in Norfolk, got married in 1996 at Norfolk’s Naval Base Chapel. “Two nations came together,” said Wieczorek. “Suddenly I had a whole family with four grown-up kids and six grandkids. After my first marriage broke down in Germany I told myself I will never have a ring on my right hand again. I kept my promise — Americans wear the ring on their left hand.”

After various assignments including service in the Eastern German states Wieczorek said he received a phone call



Master Chief  
Ferdinand Wieczorek



Col. Herman “Tracy”  
Williams III

from his boss telling him a company chief is needed in Baumholder for a three-month force protection mission.

“I thought after 10 years without the Americans it would be the right thing for me to do, so I volunteered,” Wieczorek said. His unit helped guard the gates of Baumholder’s U.S. military installations from September to December 2004.

“We enjoyed great cooperation with all authorities,” he said. “Many U.S. Soldiers wanted to qualify for the German Schutzenschnur [marksmanship badge] and needed the rifles explained. I got that job.”

Currently Wieczorek is serving as liaison officer for the German Naval Infantry’s 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, providing force protection at Spangdahlem Air Base, home to the 52nd Fighter Wing. “This job is an opportunity to serve my two countries — the country of my family and the country I have a contract with,” he said.

“I think many in America primarily see the great divide between Germany and the U.S. but they don’t realize that Germany did in fact support the U.S. and provided protection for U.S. bases in Germany,” Williams said. “This support is indicative of the great cooperation and brotherhood we have and the mutual concern for sustaining freedom.”

Wieczorek wants to retire in the United States, “just to be a grandpa to my boys and girls.”

For Williams the area around Norfolk, Va., is home where his closest relatives live and where he also wants to retire. “Chances that we run into each other again are pretty high,” he said. “That will be a way for me to maintain my memory of my time here in Germany.”

## Soldiers need documents to claim enlistment bonus

By Sgt. 1st Class

Barbara George

104th Area Support Group  
Inspector General’s Office

The 104th Area Support Group’s Inspector General’s Office has received a number of calls from Soldiers requesting assistance in processing enlistment bonuses.

When a Soldier entitled to an enlistment bonus arrives at his or her first duty station he or she must provide several documents to the servicing Finance Office.

### Transformation

Continued from page 1

serves received the hand-me-downs and leftovers from the active-duty Army,” Preston said. “But not anymore — 40 percent of our forces in the Iraqi AOR are Guard and Reserve. They are highly trained and well equipped professionals. I’m proud to serve with them, and we couldn’t do the mission without them.

“I’m very proud of what our Soldiers are doing,” he said. “I hope when they finish their tours, they can look back and say ‘I helped make the world a safer place.’”



To process an enlistment bonus Soldiers must have their DD Form 4/1, DD Form 4/2, DD Form 4/3 (Enlistment/Reenlistment Contract), DA Form 4789 (Statement of Entitlement to Selective Reenlistment Bonus) and Military Oc-

cupational Specialty orders which prove the Soldier graduated from Advanced Individual Training necessary to qualify for any specific MOS-related bonus.

In most cases once proper documents are provided to Finance it takes about four to six weeks for bonus payment.

Soldiers should attempt to process their bonus paperwork as soon as possible after arrival.

If Soldiers experience problems concerning bonus eligibility or obtaining missing bonus paperwork

they should contact their chain of command, career counselor, recruiter or local Inspector General

for assistance as soon as possible to ensure prompt problem resolution.

# AER campaign helps Soldiers help Soldiers

**By Karen Edge**  
*221st Base Support Battalion  
Public Affairs Office*

The Army Emergency Relief program provides financial assistance to Soldiers and their families in times of unforeseeable need.

The assistance comes in the form of interest-free loans.

AER is there helping Soldiers take care of Soldiers for everything from a trip home to bury a loved one

to helping pay for car repairs.

But the money has to come from somewhere so once a year AER solicits donations.

Soldiers are being given the opportunity to donate to AER this year through May 15.

Those who do contribute help make it possible for commanders to accomplish their basic command responsibility for the morale and welfare of Soldiers. Regardless of

contribution history, all Soldiers and their spouses have access to AER money.

“If a Soldier is deployed and his or her spouse has a power of attorney the spouse can come in and borrow money and the Soldier out there fighting doesn’t have to worry about his family being taken care of,” said Eric Harris, Consumer Affairs and Financial Readiness AER manager at Dexheim’s Anderson Barracks.

AER funds made available to commanders are not limited and are constrained only by the requirement of valid need, according to Harris. The first step a Soldier needs to make is to see his or her commander. Once the proper paperwork is completed it doesn’t take long to get the needed financial assistance.

“We give interest-free loans for medical and dental emergencies,

home emergencies, car repairs, funeral expenses and a host of things Soldiers may not even be aware of,” said Harris. “Repayment is done as an allotment for up to 12 months if need be or at a payment the Soldier can afford without causing further financial hardships. The program gives back to the community, and all Soldiers have access to the money they contribute.”

Harris said he recently had a Soldier come in for an AER loan to get home to her mother’s funeral. Not aware that her unit would pay this expense because it was an immediate relative, Harris referred the Soldier back to her unit but was still able to give her a loan for her husband’s and daughter’s tickets.

“Being a sergeant first class myself, my own funds are limited. As much as I’d like to reach in my pocket and help my Soldiers when

they need a little extra money until payday to get through a bad situation, I can’t always do that,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Simmons, 221st Base Support Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, who recently referred a Soldier to AER when the Soldier’s vehicle failed inspection and he had no money for repairs. “This ensured the Soldier could take care of his family by being able to go back and forth to work and appointments. It relieved him of the stress by knowing he had adequate transportation for his family.”

Whether it is a small loan until payday for food or rent, a larger loan to cover a paycheck that may have been stolen, delayed or for undergraduate-level education scholarships to children and spouses of Soldiers, AER dollars are Soldier funded and Soldier spent.